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ABSTRACT

One of a series of pre-apprenticeship phase 1 training modules, this self-paced student training module deals with realistically assessing the work one is interested in through a worksite visit. Included in the module are the following: cover sheet listing module title, goals, and performance indicators; introduction; study guide/check list with directions for module completion; information sheet discussing group and individual worksite visits; self-assessment; self-assessment answers; assignment; and post assessment. (Other related pre-apprenticeship training modules are available separately--see note.) (MN)

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ED217265

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING SYSTEMS

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PHASE 1 TRAINING

FINDING A JOB
WORKSITE VISITS

Goal:

The student will learn how to make a realistic assessment of the work he or she is interested in.

Performance Indicators:

The student will gather first-hand information, by taking part in a group site visit, by interviewing a worker in one of the trades, by studying Help Wanted advertisements and by giving written and spoken reports on his or her findings. The student will also demonstrate understanding of the information by completing a written Self Assessment test.

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Study Guide

Check off each task as you complete it.

1. ____ Read the Goal and Performance Indicators and the Information Section.

2. ____ Complete the Self Assessment and compare your answers with those on the Self Assessment Answer Sheet. If you have any different answers, go back and re-read the information.

3. ____ Complete Assignment #1.

4. ____ Complete Assignment #2.

5. ____ Complete Assignment #3.

6. ____ Complete Assignment #4.

7. ____ Complete Assignment #5.

8. ____ Complete Assignment #6.

9. ____ Complete Assignment #7 and continue to the next module.

Information

"Excellent working conditions. Good benefits"
"Good wages and insurance benefits"
"...full benefits package"
"...good potential"
"Exceptional working conditions with excellent salary and benefits"
"...an excellent opportunity"
"...excellent benefits"

These phrases were taken from one column of Help Wanted advertisements in a local newspaper.

Even though these job descriptions have been written at a time when there are many more people wanting work than there are jobs available, the advertisers thought it necessary to sell each position with words such as "excellent" and "exceptional." It is clear that not many jobs could live up to all the glowing praise that is heaped on them in some job descriptions. How often do you see an advertisement that, in addition to describing what a wonderful opportunity is being offered, also adds details such as: "boring at times," "loud music played constantly," "the boss occastionally yells at you," etc.? The point that is being made is that unless you investigate what is involved in a job, you are likely to get only part of the picture.

There is plenty of proof that new workers leave when the expectations they have about their jobs are unrealistic. It would, of course, be much easier if all job descriptions included the negative aspects of the work as well as all the good things. But, until this is a standard hiring practice, it is your responsibility, as a person looking for a satisfying job to find out as much information as you possibly can, before you spend a lot of time and energy working in it.

You may have acquired all the necessary basic skills and have enjoyed using them, but when you have found out about the actual working conditions, the duties and responsibilities, the human side of the job you are interested in--"the rules of the game," the problems encountered in that work, even the boss' likes and dislikes--you are then in a position of reality that enables you to make a choice with your eyes open and all the evidence in front of you. The best way of finding this out is by making on-site visits and talking person-to-person with workers in that type of job.

Even if you do not have a particular job in mind, it is very important that you experience different working environments. If you are interested in a trade, are you still enthusiastic about it after seeing it practiced in a "real life" working context? The learning and "hands-on" experience you acquire in a Pre-Apprenticeship class are part of an introduction. The real world of the trades is "out there" and you must go and see for yourself. Your mechanical interests and manual abilities are not enough if you do not like the working conditions. The way to find out if you are not suited to a trade is to make on-site visits and observe not only the work being done, but the working conditions, etc.

A further reason for making job site visits and talking with people in a trade that interests you is that you become better informed and will be more impressive in future interviews. If you know about the work conditions and environment and like them, you are going to be a lot more convincing. Employers and Apprenticeship Committees are well aware that the best workers are those who have a genuine interest and enthusiasm for the work.

In this module, two types of job site visits are recommended. The first is a group visit, which is likely to be arranged by the instructor. The second is a less formal visit that you arrange by yourself or with a friend.

A. Group Visit

This could be to any working environment or organization where group visits are welcome; it does not have to be confined to a specific trade area. Any exposure to different working environments will increase your sense of reality of what the work world is like. It will give you an experience that you can use for comparison. It will also give you practice in observing what is going on in the work environment and give you an opportunity to ask questions about things that are important to your future job satisfaction.

The following points and questions are repeated on a sheet at the end of this module so that you can use it during or after your actual job site visit. It is suggested that you find out through observation:

1. What the physical demands of the job are (lifting, pushing, pulling, climbing, kneeling, etc.).
2. What some of the hazards and dangers of the work are (fumes, noise, power machinery, etc.).
3. What the attitude of people on the job is like.
4. What sort of safety procedures are required and enforced.
5. What standards of neatness and cleanliness there are.
6. What types of tools and machinery are used?
7. How many different kinds of jobs and tasks you can see being carried out.
8. What provision there is for rest and lunch areas.

In addition to your observations you will have the chance of asking questions of the person who shows you around, a personnel officer or the employer or boss. Here is a list of questions which will gather a lot of important information:

1. How does someone enter this field? Are there many or few jobs open?
2. What do you look for in a person you hire? What kind of training, credentials or experience do you require? Is there any type of personality you look for?
3. What sort of training is there?
4. What are the typical hours and duties of someone doing this type of work?
5. How quickly do you promote an entry level employee? To what position?
6. What benefits are there (holiday, insurance, pension, help with personal problems, etc.)?
7. Are there any seasonal shutdowns or lay-offs?
8. What sort of turnover is there?
9. Is this a Union or Non-Union workplace?

B. Individual Visits

The purpose of making individual visits is to gain as much realistic information about job conditions, duties, unwritten rules, etc. as you can. They are likely to take place after working hours, because it is the worker you are visiting, rather than the work site. (It is not a good idea to try to

interview a busy worker on the site!) After work, and preferably in a different environment, you are much more likely to get your questions answered fully and truthfully--giving positive and negative experiences. You will probably need to describe exactly why you are asking the questions and what use you will put them to. It is very important that information gathered in this way is only used for job and career exploration within your group.

You will have to use any personal contacts you know, or ask your instructor for names of journeymen or apprentices you can call to set up an appointment. Wherever possible ask your questions face-to-face, rather than by telephone.

When you call to make an appointment, a possible introduction might be: "My name is _____. I am a student in a pre-apprenticeship program at _____ and I am very interested in finding out what it is like working in your trade. I know you must be busy but I wonder if I could come and see you for about half an hour and ask you a few questions about your job?

When you make your visit, here are some suggested questions you could ask:

1. What is a typical day like for someone in this trade?
2. What jobs do you do most frequently?
3. What do you like about working in this trade?
4. What don't you like?
5. What sort of rules are there?
6. What are the boss' likes and dislikes about work?
7. How did you get into the trade?
8. What kind of training did/do you get?
9. What sort of future do you have in the trade?

Self Assessment

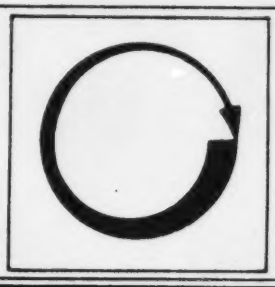
Answer true or false to the statements below. Compare your answers with those given on the next page; if your answers are different, go back and read the Information again.

1. ____ Job descriptions in newspapers tell you everything you need to know about a job.
2. ____ If you want to get a realistic idea of what a job is like, you need to visit the work site.
3. ____ It is the employer's responsibility to tell you the full facts about a job.
4. ____ Journeymen and apprentices can tell you more about working conditions in a trade than anyone else.
5. ____ On a group job-site visit, you will be told everything you need to know.
6. ____ You can pick up a lot of information during a visit just by observing working conditions, attitudes, etc.
7. ____ The more information you have about a trade, the more realistic will be your expectations.
8. ____ If you want to ask personal questions of a journeyman or apprentice, it is best to do it while they are working.
9. ____ It is worth spending time and energy finding out about working conditions in a trade <u>before</u> you try to enter it.
10. ____ You can learn all you need to know about the trades from an outside visitor coming to your classroom.

Self Assessment Answers

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. F

Assignment



1. Look in the "Help Wanted" section of the local newspaper. Write down words and phrases that give a very favorable description of the job. Are there any words that suggest a negative side?

2. Write a realistic job description for something that interests you; list a few of the less attractive details, as well as all the good things.

3. Contact a journeyman or apprentice and arrange an appointment.

4. Ask the journeyman or apprentice the questions in this module, plus any of your own, and report back to the group with a summary of your findings.

5. Make a group visit. Record the observations suggested in this module and be sure that your group asks all the questions.

6. Report back to your group with your written observations.

7. Discuss with the whole group your findings from your visit.

OBSERVATIONS DURING A SITE VISIT

1. What are the physical demands of the job or jobs?

2. Are there any dangers or hazards in the work?

3. What is the attitude of the workers, supervisors and employers?

4. What safety rules and procedures are there?

5. How clean and neat is the workplace?

6. What types of tools and machinery are used?

7. How many different types of jobs can you see being done?

8. What are the rest and lunch areas like?